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## STATEMENT

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Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General  
BC Coroners Service

### **Chief coroner's statement on future with BC Coroners Service**

VICTORIA – Lisa Lapointe, chief coroner, has released the following statement on her future with the BC Coroners Service and the B.C. Public Service:

“February 2024 will mark the end of my third term of appointment as chief coroner. It will also mark my 30th year as a member of the B.C. Public Service. It has been an incredible honour to have been chief coroner for the past 13 years and a public servant for so many more, and I have decided that this is the right time for me to retire. The chief coroner is appointed by an order of the Lieutenant Governor after a merit-based process. As per the Coroners Act, the initial term may be three to five years and reappointments of up to five years can be made. My third term of appointment ends on Feb. 18, 2024. The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General will initiate a recruitment process to choose my successor.

“I started my B.C. Public Service career in 1995 when I was appointed as a coroner by chief coroner Vince Cain. Throughout the past three decades, I’ve held positions in the Coroners Service, Corrections Branch and the province’s Civil Forfeiture Office. In each role, it was an honour to serve the public and a joy to work alongside the dedicated public service professionals who were my colleagues. Each new job brought an opportunity to learn new subject matter, develop new skills and create new friendships. I am incredibly fortunate to have spent my career doing work that was engaging, collaborative and, most importantly, meaningful. A public service career is both an occupation and a calling, and I am grateful to have been given so many wonderful opportunities to support positive change.

“Both humbling and challenging, my years as chief coroner have been the highlight of my career. I have been fortunate to have worked with dedicated professionals from municipalities, federal and provincial ministries, and from other countries. I have valued the collegiality of my chief coroner and chief medical examiner counterparts across the country who collaborate regularly to support excellence in death investigation and provide moral support in trying times. More recently, our national group has been joined by talented members of the Public Health Agency of Canada, as we work together to develop best-practice common approaches to our work. At every level, the support and camaraderie that all of these dedicated professionals have demonstrated has been heartwarming and inspiring.

“The work of a coroner is a challenging one, investigating the circumstances of deaths to provide information and assistance to families and communities devastated by the sudden loss of their loved ones. For every tragic loss, the coroner must consider whether there is an opportunity to prevent similar deaths in the future. In this way, the role of the coroner, which may seem a bleak one, provides an opportunity to advance meaningful change. This is the most silver of linings in often very dark clouds.

“As our agency has continued to evolve to meet the needs of an ever more engaged public, my colleagues at the BC Coroners Service have been a source of inspiration. Working 24/7 in every part of our province, B.C.’s coroners and support staff are kind, compassionate and dedicated. More numerous to count are the times I’ve been approached at a public event by someone who wants to tell me of how a B.C. coroner made a terrible time easier for them. While we strive for service excellence, it is kindness that matters most.

“There is never a perfect time to leave and there are many significant challenges facing British Columbians and the Coroners Service that will endure after my departure. Like so many others, our agency has been forever altered by the toxic-drug public health emergency that continues to take the lives of people of all ages in communities throughout B.C., and it deeply saddens me that we have been unable to influence the essential change necessary to reduce the tragic impacts of toxic drugs on so many thousands of our family members, friends and colleagues across the province. The measures recommended by the expert members of Coroners Service death-review panels are essential to ending this crisis and I will continue to support those recommendations post retirement.

“Over the next few months, I will continue to oversee the impartial, objective and compassionate investigations, inquests and death-review panels undertaken by my agency, and will continue to look for opportunities to build strategic alliances throughout the province and across the country to enhance public confidence and public safety. Public service is a privilege and I have been honoured to have played a small part in serving the people of B.C. over the past 30 years.”

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